



## NEWS RELEASE

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# State Responds to Tornadoes and Flooding

## *Gov. Pete Ricketts Declares State of Emergency*

**Lincoln, Neb.** — State Officials have concerns that forecasts for additional rainfall could further impact flooded areas in southeast Nebraska following storms and tornadoes that swept through the state Wednesday night.

The southeast areas of Nebraska received 5 to 12 inches of precipitation. Gauges in the local area reached minor flooding levels, while six river gauge readings reached moderate or major flooding levels. There were 46 counties under tornado watches for storms and 12 had tornado warnings.

According to the National Weather Service, river forecasts for the Missouri River from Plattsmouth and below could reach minor flooding stages by this weekend. The National Weather Service has issued flood warnings for some of those locations. They are advising the public to not drive cars through areas where water covers the roads.

**Nebraska Emergency Management Agency** — The state emergency operations center at NEMA is partially activated in response to damages resulting from tornadoes and flooding. Officials from the Nebraska State Patrol, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Roads and the Nebraska Military Department are staffing the state emergency operation center (SEOC). There is 24-hour-a-day staff coverage of the SEOC by NEMA staff.

Gov. Pete Ricketts declared a state of emergency for the affected areas and toured via the Nebraska State Patrol helicopter including a flyover of Roseland where 10 homes were damaged including two that were destroyed. He spoke with reporters following the flight.

“The good news is nobody was hurt and everybody is safe,” Ricketts said. “Utility crews are out there working. We did have a power outage last night in about a third of the town. As we flew over the state we saw more utility crews continuing to work to restore power to folks in Roseland.

Ricketts said he authorized an emergency declaration and NEMA is working with state agencies to monitor the situation and provide any assistance that is needed.

“We are urging everyone to please stay out of all flood waters for your own safety,” said NEMA Assistant Director Bryan Tuma. “Bacteria and infections can occur as well as unexpected injuries from falling in the water.”

**Department of Natural Resources** continues to monitor the aftermath of the storm including river and dam conditions. Citizens are advised to be cautious about high river stages and water running over roads and dams’ auxiliary spillways. Officials urge people not to risk personal safety and vehicle damage by getting stuck in a flooded roadway too deep to cross. Take the high road and turn around.

Engineers with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Dam Safety Program have been working with the local Nebraska Resource Districts (NRD) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to monitor the dams in Saline, Fillmore, Thayer, Jefferson and Lancaster Counties.

DNR’s Dam Safety Program inspected five dams in Saline and Jefferson Counties in the hardest hit areas where rainfall totals exceeded 10 inches. The dams were found to be performing optimally, holding back thousands of acre-feet of floodwater with no significant problems.

Water was flowing through the earthen auxiliary spillways at four of the dams that were inspected. The other dam had been overtopped by flood water but was not damaged. All the dams affected by Wednesday night’s rainfall with populated areas downstream have emergency action plans in place. These action plans could be activated if conditions at the dams would warrant further action.

Local and state officials will continue to monitor the condition of the dams. DNR staff has been monitoring river conditions throughout the area. Stream gaging crews are out measuring high water stages and flows since this morning.

With elevated river stages, saturated grounds, and additional rain forecast this Saturday, DNR Acting Director **Jim Schneider** said, “I want to advise residents along the flooding rivers to be aware of weather alerts and flooding warnings.”

**Nebraska Department of Roads** had reports that flooding closed the following roads. Please use caution as roadways may still be flooded.

Highway 6 at PlaMor, water under railroad overhead

Highway 6 Waverly to Lincoln, water over Highway 6 and 84th street,

Highway 34 at Malcolm Spur, water over highway

Highway 77 North and South of Saltillo, water over highway, Fire, State Patrol rescued people out of vehicles

Highway 77 South of Highway 33, water over highway

Roca Spur closed, water over highway Hickman Spur, water over highway

Highway 103 between Crete and Wilber, water over highway

Highway 103 at DeWitt, water over highway

Highway 63 North of Alvo, water over highway

Highway 92 West of Wahoo is one lane, water over highway

Swanton Spur, water over highway

Highway 15 Saline/Jefferson County line, water over highway

Highway 6 East of Waverly, water over highway

Highway 66 Detour at Ashland, water over the detour (Guard camp road)

**Nebraska State Patrol** troops were actively assisting with road closures, rescue operations and providing situational awareness with helicopter flights over affected areas.

**Department of Health and Human Services** reports they are working to assist the Parkview Nursing Home in Deshler that was evacuated to the public school due to flooding. DHHS staff are assessing needs of other assisted living facilities. Public Health is monitoring public water systems in communities affected by flooding.

**Lancaster County Emergency Management** — Public safety officials are advising residents in the North and South Bottoms neighborhoods to voluntarily evacuate as soon as possible. The affected area is bordered by Folsom, Eighth, Van Dorn and Cornhusker streets.

Salt Creek is getting close to topping the levee as other creeks drain into it.

The American Red Cross will be available at two for those who need a place to go:

F Street Recreation Center, 1225 F St.

Belmont Recreation Center, 1234 Judson

Those needing assistance with transportation can call (402) 441-5530.

**Jefferson County Emergency Management** — Residents in 169 homes west of the railroad tracks in Fairbury were evacuated. Twenty-six people were housed at the American Lutheran Church. A total of 110 people evacuated. Endicott evacuated a brick yard manufacturing facility.

**Saline County Emergency Management** — DeWitt has four or more feet of standing water throughout the community. Every home has water in the basement. There is one report of a collapsed basement. No reports of injuries. Voluntary evacuation is ongoing using two large volunteer fire department trucks and one from Plymouth volunteer fire department. The city has its pay-loader also in service pulling small boats to evacuate residents.

Tri-County Schools opened its campus and this is where the evacuees are being transported to in school vans. Public Health Solutions from Crete is bringing food, water, and restrooms for the townspeople at the school.

Volunteer firemen are going house to house asking if people want to be evacuated. Evacuation is not mandatory at this time.

**Thayer County Emergency Management** — Parkview Nursing Home and six homes were inundated by flood waters in Deshler. Forty-three people were evacuated to the public school.

**State wide anyone needing assistance from the American Red Cross should call (844) 334-7569**

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